

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-30 and 50-55 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action, claims 1, 3, 6-9, 11, 13-19, 22-30 and 50-54 were allowed and claims 10, 12, 20, 21 and 55 were rejected. Claim 4 was objected to. Claim 4 has been amended and claims 10, 12, 20 and 21 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added. Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Election/Restrictions

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that all previously withdrawn claims have been rejoined as they depend from allowed independent claim 1. Applicants note that formerly withdrawn claims 4 and 16-22 should now be allowable, but the Office Action fails to indicate this.

Claim Objections

Claim 4 was objected to because it depends from cancelled claim 2. Claim 4 has been amended so that it depends from claim 1 thereby obviating the objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10, 12, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claims the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claims 10, 12 and 20 the Examiner indicated that there were duplicates of the collar and passages being claimed. The Examiner failed to elaborate on the rejection of claim 21.

Without conceding the issue of patentability and in order to expedite prosecution, claims 10, 12, 20 and 21 have been cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 55 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,490,837 to Blaeser et al. Without conceding the issue of patentability and in order to expedite prosecution, claim 55 has been cancelled.

Allowable Subject Matter

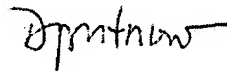
Claims 1, 3, 6-9, 11, 13-19, 22-30 and 50-54 were allowed in the Office Action. Additionally, as previously mentioned above, formerly withdrawn claims 4 and 16-22 have now been rejoined as they depend from allowed independent claim 1, therefore claims 4 and 16-22 should also be allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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